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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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09/864,043

05/23/2001

Saadat H. Khan

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25901

7590

04/05/2007

ERNEST D. BUFF

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EXAMINER

BORLINGHAUS, JASON M

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3693

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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3 MONTHS

04/05/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/864,043

Applicant(s)

KHAN, SAADAT H.

Examiner

Jason M. Borlinghaus

Art Unit

3693

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 December 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 459-469 and 471-473 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 459-469, 471-473 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

Claim 463 is objected to because of the following informalities: improper word. Claim 463 states "transmit a notification to the buyer, which notification indicates..." (emphasis added). Claim 463 should state "transmit a notification to the buyer, said notification indicates...".

Please examine all claims and, where required, correct appropriately.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 460 – 461, 467 – 468 and 471 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 460 - 461, 467 - 468 and 471 utilize the phrase "and/or" which fails to distinctly claim the subject matter. All occurrences of "and/or" in the cited claims were interpreted as "or" by the Examiner for purposes of application of prior art.

Claim 468 utilizes the phrase "wild card discounts" which fails to distinctly claim the subject matter. Examiner read such claim limitation as merely "discounts," as the Examiner was unable to find a definitive definition of the phrase "wild card discounts."

Please examine all claims and, where required, correct appropriately.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 459 – 470 and 471 - 473 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Walker (US Patent 5,794,207) in view of Miller (Miller, Michael. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Online Auctions*. Que. 1999. pp. 7 – 43) and Official Notice.

Regarding Claim 459, Walker discloses a (online auction) system for processing the sale and purchase of items, comprising:

- a. a storage device (data storage device). (see col. 11, line 40 – col. 14, line 52);
 - b. a processor (CPU) connected to the storage device. (see col. 11, line 40 – col. 14, line 52; fig. 2); and
- the storage device storing a program (software) for controlling the processor (see col. 11, line 40 – col. 14, line 52);
- and the processor operative with the program to:

- i. receive sell offers from a seller (counteroffers) and bargain offers (purchase offers) from a buyer, including conditions for purchase (other conditions the buyer requires) and a payment identifier (payment preferences), thereby defining said bargain offer (see col. 8, line 27 – col. 9, line 50; col. 20, line 50 – col. 21, line 67; Claim 1) ;
- ii. carry out a bargaining (offer/counteroffer exchange) process with said buyer to arrive at a price for at least one of said items that is agreed on by said buyer and said seller. (see col. 22, line 40 – col. 23, line 17);
- iii. arrange for the purchase (payment) of said at least one item by said buyer from said seller at said price. (see col. 20, line 50 – col. 21, line 67); and
- iv. a graphic display (see col. 14, lines 56 – 59).

Walker does not teach a system in which the graphic display is adapted to graphically depict a probability for system acceptance of buyer's offer for purchase of the product.

Miller discloses a system (online auction system) further comprising a graphic display adapted to graphically depict a probability for system acceptance of buyer's offer (bid) for purchase of the product (such as whether a buyer's offer is the current winning bid or, at least, satisfies a reserve price). (see pp. 20 – 22; 28 – 30).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Walker by incorporating a graphical display, as

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disclosed by Miller, allowing for a buyer to monitor their status within the sale process and the probability of the sale proceeding to completion.

Regarding Claim 460, Walker discloses a system further operative to:

- verify the legitimacy, authenticity and condition of said product. (Walker discloses that the central controller verifies that the seller can provide the specific good requested. Such verification includes verifying that seller is a legitimate and authenticated seller of such items.
Furthermore, should the delivered goods not meet all the conditions and terms of the CPO, the central controller, acting as arbiter, verifies the condition of said products. – see col. 7, lines 9 – 12; col. 19 line 13 – col. 20, line 48);
- verify the pricing of products listed by the seller. (Walker discloses verification of price listed in seller counteroffer via authentication of seller posting the counteroffer – see col. 22, line 39 – col. 23, line 18);
- said verification comprising the steps of:
 - a. checking product certification (whether product meets conditions of CPO as certified via seller acceptance of CPO) at the time of pick-up or delivery. (see col. 20, lines 31 – 48); and
 - b. checking condition of said product at the time of pickup or delivery. (see col. 20, lines 31 – 48).

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Walker does not teach a system further comprising obtaining issuance of an authenticity certificate from an authorized appraiser and obtaining a price evaluation from said authorized appraiser.

Examiner takes **Official Notice** that authentication of an item by an authorized appraiser, issuance of an authenticity certificate certifying such authenticity, and obtainment of a price evaluation from an authorized appraiser is old and well known in the art of sales and auction, such methodologies are typically employed, although not limited to, instances in which a purchaser is considering buying fine art or antiques.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified Walker and Miller by incorporating methodologies directed to ensuring authenticity and appraisal value of a potential purchase, as is old and well known in the art, thereby ensuring that the potential purchase item is as advertised and priced by the seller.

Regarding Claims 461 – 469 and 471 - 473, Walker discloses a system wherein said processor is further operative with the program to:

- validate a received bargain offer signal (conditional purchase offer – CPO) from said buyer or sell offer signal from seller (seller response) and thereby determine whether said received offer signal meets predetermined validation criteria. (see col. 16, line 12 – col. 17, lines 46; see col. 19, line 12 – 54);
- start the bargain process by generating bargain prices (via exchange of CPOs with modified conditions, such as price) for said buyer and said seller continuously until a point is reached where an acceptable price is

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arrived at or said buyer or said seller stop bargaining. (see col. 22, line 40 – col. 23, line 18);

- transmit a notification (counter-offer) the buyer, said buyer's bargain (CPO) is less than minimum predetermined criteria. (see col. 22, line 39 – col. 23, line 59);
 - permit buyer to request free chances (CPO opportunities) or buy more chances (CPO opportunities) at a predetermined chance purchase price (flat fee). (see col. 20, lines 16 – 39);
 - permit buyer to use one or more bargain chances (CPO opportunities) provided by the system to continue bargaining until all chances (CPO opportunities) have been used, said buyer having an election to purchase additional chances (CPO opportunities) for a predetermined purchase price (fee). (see col. 20, lines 16 – 39);
 - further configured to indicate to the buyer that a bargain price (CPO) generated (transmitted) by said system, upon being accepted by said seller, will remain active, subject to acceptance by said buyer, during a predetermined time period (expiration date), provided that the product or service appointed for purchase remains available. (see col. 13, lines 11 – 29);
 - track buyer's accumulation of a predetermined number of purchases (tracking each CPO via the buyer database). (see col. 13, lines 1 – 10);
- and

- providing at least one message (messages) during bargaining (on the CPO), said message being an advertisement. (see col. 20, lines 16 – 30).

Walker does not teach a system wherein said processor is operative to: notify the buyer concerning the status of shipment in transit, said notification being provided at the time of sale and periodically in response to a buyer or seller request after purchase of said product; enable the buyer to use discounts to enhance bargaining opportunities; award discounts or promotions; track buyer's accumulation of a predetermined number of purchase points, and notify buyer that said accumulation of purchase points are applicable to provide additional discounts; provide at least one pop-up message during bargaining, said surprise message according an additional discount on the product.

Examiner takes **Official Notice** that notifying the buyer concerning the status of shipment in transit, said notification being provided at the time of sale and periodically in response to a buyer request after purchase of said product is old and well known in the art of sales and auctions.

Examiner takes **Official Notice** that enabling a buyer to use discounts to enhance bargaining opportunities, such as through the obtainment of a price discount; awarding discounts or promotions; accumulation of purchase points and the awarding of a promotional item, such as a discount, upon accumulation of a predetermined quantity of such points; pop-up messages advertising a discount on a product or other incentive are all old and well known in the art of advertising and promotions.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Walker, Miller and Official Notice by incorporating

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a method by which to monitor the status of a shipment, as is old and well known in the art, as such is standard and conventional in the art of online purchases, and to allow the purchaser to remain informed about the possible arrival date of said purchase.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified Walker, Miller and Official Notice by incorporating traditional advertising and promotional methodologies, as are old and well known, as employment of such methods is standard and conventional.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 12/11/06 have been fully considered but they are persuasive, in part, and not persuasive, in part.

§112 Rejections

Examiner has consulted with his current SPE, and his current SPE feels that the prior rejection for overlapping of statutory classes is no longer applicable.

"Adapted To" Claim Terminology

Regarding the claim limitation of "provid[ing] a graphic display, adapted to graphically depict a probability for system acceptance of buyer's offer for purchase of the product" claimed in originally presented Claim 470 (currently cancelled) and in amended Claim 468, MPEP §2111.04 [R-3] states:

Claim scope is not limited by claim language that suggests or makes optional but does not require steps to be performed, or by claim language that does not limit a claim to a

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particular structure. However, examples of claim language, although not exhaustive, that may raise a question as to the limiting effect of the language in a claim are:

(A) "adapted to" or "adapted for" clauses;

As such, the claim "weight" for the depiction of a probability upon said graphic display is questionable, although such claim limitation was met by the prior art previously cited.

§ 103 Rejection

Examiner has rewritten his prior rejection utilizing the same prior art to more closely map the claim language to the prior art and to further explain Examiner's interpretation of the prior art.

Examiner would like to state that the claim terminology currently utilized is still very broad. Examiner is fully aware that it is imperative to any Applicant to obtain a patent with the broadest claim language permissible. However, an Examiner is to interpret claim terminology as to provide the "broadest reasonable interpretation consistent with the specification during the examination of a patent application since the applicant may then amend his claims." See *In re Prater and Wei*, 162 USPQ 541, 550 (CCPA 1969).

Examiner's Note

The Examiner has cited particular columns and line numbers in the references as applied to the claims for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific

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limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested from the applicant, in preparing the responses, to fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the Examiner.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).


A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jason M. Borlinghaus whose telephone number is (571) 272-6924. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30am-5:00pm M-F.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James Kramer can be reached on (571) 272-6783. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

 4/2/07
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